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Seventy-first year

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Monday, 10 October 2016, 11 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Churkin	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Moustafa
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. González de Linares Palou
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2016/824)

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The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2016/824)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Mr. Abderrazzak Laassel, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Morocco.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/824, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): The Council has before it the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/824) on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). I would like to briefly update the Council on key developments since the issuance of the report.

We are at the end of the rainy season — a traditionally volatile period — which has been used by armed groups and other spoilers to advance their interests. Last week, on 4 October, tensions flared when a member of the Central African Armed Forces, the former of head of the personal security team of the interim President Samba-Panza, was shot and killed in the predominantly Muslim neighbourhood of PK5 in the third district of Bangui by a gunman reportedly affiliated with a self-defence group from PK5. In retaliatory acts of violence, a total of 12 people were killed and another 20 wounded by some by uncontrolled elements of the Central African Armed Forces, self-defence groups and unknown perpetrators. Fourteen people are still missing, but may be hiding.

MINUSCA acted decisively to prevent an outbreak of intercommunal violence, including by securing the perimeter of the PK5 neigbourhood. It also engaged with the Central African Republic authorities at the highest level to coordinate the response. Representatives of the Government of the Central African Republic and the Muslim community called for calm. President Touadéra ordered an investigation into the killings, including the reprisal actions. The President also activated — for the first time — the joint coordination mechanism between MINUSCA and the national security and defence forces. Joint patrols were undertaken and MINUSCA adjusted its protection efforts to better and more directly respond to the needs of civilians and to encourage community dialogue. Calm has since largely returned to Bangui, but the tension remains palpable. For example, on 7 October the body of a young Muslim man was dumped by alleged elements of the Central African Armed Forces in front of one of MINUSCA's camp. The Government, MINUSCA and civil society leaders are making an effort to break the cycle of violence and put an end to impunity.

In the provinces, in the north-west and in Kaga-Bandoro, recent clashes between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka factions and retaliatory attacks against the civilian population have resulted in significant loss of human life and forced 3,200 people to flee their homes. The more than 16 attacks on aid groups in the region in September alone forced many organizations to temporarily relocate staff and reduce or suspend their operations. MINUSCA has enhanced its uniformed personnel deployments and used its good offices in these areas to protect civilians and reduce tensions.

Meanwhile, in the north-east of the country, members of some ex-Séléka factions have continued to gather in the town of Bria for an assembly, which some want to use to reunite the ex-Séléka. MINUSCA, in line with its mandate, maintains a robust posture in the area. The Mission continues to enforce the weapons-free zone and to communicate its intent to arrest any combatant caught in town with a weapon.

In stark contrast with these worrying developments, the Central African authorities continued to make progress in implementing President Touadéra's vision

for the country, including by engaging the armed groups to start a formal dialogue on the launch of the national programme on disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation. The first meeting of the consultative monitoring committee is expected to be convened in Bangui on 12 October by President Touadera. Representatives of 11 out of the 14 armed groups are expected to participate. Those refusing to attend include the ex-Séléka Front patriotique pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique; the Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation, or the 3R; and the anti-Balaka Mokom faction.

In line with its strategic objective, MINUSCA has supported all the Government's outreach and awareness-raising efforts to help lay the groundwork for the dialogue. Last Wednesday, MINUSCA met with ex-Séléka representatives in Bria and urged them to join the first committee meeting. Indeed, many of the leaders agreed to participate and reiterated their commitment to forging lasting peace, while nonetheless noting their concerns over the Government's commitment to inclusive solutions. In this regard, the ex-Séléka assembly in Bria can be seen as an effort to strengthen the negotiation position of certain armed groups before the dialogue.

Continued international support for the Central African people in their endeavours to stabilize the country is now more critical than ever. The importance of the donors' conference, hosted by the European Union in Brussels on 17 November, cannot be overemphasized. In previous crises in Central Africa, the international community often failed to sustain its engagement in the country over time, which critically undermined stabilization efforts. While the primary responsibility for the restoration of peace and stability rests with the Central Africans, the international community must also keep its word. I would like to mention that, in a demonstration of the United Nations commitment to peace in the country, the Deputy Secretary-General agreed to lead the Organization's delegation in Brussels.

Preparations for the Brussels conference have benefited from a unity of effort between the international community and the Central African Government. The country's needs for the next five years have been jointly assessed by the Government, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. As a political complement to these efforts, I welcome President Touadéra's personal commitment to strengthening cooperation between the Central African Republic and the international community through the mutual accountability framework, sometimes called the "compact", which is in development. At the ministerial-level meeting held on 23 September on the margins of the general debate, President Touadéra announced his intention to finalize this mutual accountability framework before the Brussels conference.

It is therefore more critical than ever to maintain a positive momentum to build peace in the Central African Republic. Important progress has inarguably been made so far, but there is a great need for it. The country's institutions must be strengthened in a spirit of inclusiveness to make progress in national reconciliation. Key reforms must be undertaken in the security and defence sectors. The promotion and protection of human rights needs to be strengthened, and impunity must be brought to an end. Inclusive economic development must be fostered. State authority under the rule of law must be extended. Finally, basic services for all must be improved.

Recent events show that the situation remains fragile, and spoilers are still active on both sides, I would say. Central African institutions must do everything in their power and more to stop attacks against humanitarian actors and help create the conditions for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, an area that has seen very little progress. More than ever, MINUSCA and the international community must stand firmly by the side of the Central Africans to address these challenges.

Everything that can be done, in particular by the members of the Council, to rally the greatest number of Member States, including non-traditional donors, to support the country ahead of the Brussels conference should be done. With such concerted and persistent effort, there is a good chance that we can help Central Africans to lay down the foundations for a lasting peace in a country that has suffered for too long.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Laassel.

Mr. Laassel: I would like to start by Ambassador Hilale's apologies for his absence today. He was in fact here in the Chamber earlier this morning, but he was called to speak at the Fourth Committee. I am therefore making this statement on his behalf.

I would like to start by congratulating the Russian Federation on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, and by thanking you, Mr. President, for your invitation to speak in the Security Council today. It is always a pleasure and an honour for Morocco to brief the Council on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), in its capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the PBC.

I would also like to welcome and support the comprehensive briefing delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, on the situation in the Central African Republic, and commend him for his tireless efforts aimed at building peace in that country and for the cooperation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the PBC.

It is my pleasure to brief the members of the Council on Mr. Hilale's most recent visit to the Central African Republic, in particular on his participation at the ninth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic (ICG-CAR). The report of his mission will be circulated to all members in due course, following the usual practice.

On the occasion of his second visit to Bangui, Mr. Hilale was invited to participate at the ninth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, co-chaired by the African Union and the Republic of the Congo. As mentioned in his report, the meeting was attended by 25 countries and by representatives of several organizations. Strong regional mobilization was noted during this meeting and should be encouraged and welcomed.

The main issues raised during the Bangui meeting were as follows. The first tier of issues were political issues; security issues; disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration (DDRR) issues; and security sector reform (SSR) issues. The second tier of issues involved justice, reconciliation and the fight against impunity. The third tier of issues related to the humanitarian situation, refugees and internally displaced persons. The fourth tier of issues related to recovery and peacebuilding. Since each of those topics are addressed in the report, I will limit myself to highlighting the main issues discussed during the Bangui meeting and in Mr. Hilale's various exchanges throughout his visit. While other issues such as the humanitarian or the economic situations will not be addressed in this briefing, they remain of paramount importance.

The Government expressed its strong commitment to the success of the DDRR, SSR and national reconciliation programmes based on the recommendations of the Bangui Forum. Presidential decrees on the coordination of these three programmes were promulgated in order to support the efforts of the Government in this regard in a coordinated manner. Efforts were also made by the Government in the implementation of the Special Criminal Court.

With respect to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration, interlocutors expressed the need for strong political and financial support. The main task of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) will be to support the Government in implementing a DDRR programme. To date, the World Bank is the main partner, financing approximately half of the estimated budget. This is not the first time that a DDRR programme has been planned for the Central African Republic. It is therefore important to benefit from the lessons learned from past DDRR programmes. DDRR is a vast and complex issue that will have a crucial impact on the stabilization of the country.

The main problem remains funding, but other aspects, such as the identification of beneficiaries or the inclusiveness of the entire process, are also important and must be dealt with carefully. For its part, the Government is encouraged to redouble its efforts and pursue its dialogue in an inclusive manner with all armed groups. We welcome the fact that dialogue with the armed groups is scheduled to restart in the coming days, as Mr. Ladsous mentioned earlier. We take this opportunity to commend the commitment of the Government, MINUSCA and the World Bank in this regard and call upon all involved stakeholders to increase their efforts aimed at investing in building the foundation of a successful DDRR process as early as possible.

Secondly, with respect to security sector reform in the Central African Republic, SSR is crucial for the stabilization of the country, in particular with regard to the extension of State authority. In accordance with its mandate, MINUSCA, with the backing of other partners, has the challenging task of supporting the Government in this critical endeavour. In this regard,

we welcome the involvement of the European Union, which initiated a military training and advisory mission with the objective of training two battalions of the national armed forces with a view to constituting a republican and professional army under the authority of the Government.

We also welcome the commitment of the countries of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, announced during the ICG-CAR meeting, to train one battalion per country. The implementation of this commitment will be an important step towards the success of the programme, and further bilateral support is also encouraged given the important needs of the country. Based on the draft national security policy, we note that the SSR programme will also need to include the reinforcement of the police and gendarmerie, as well as a clarification of their respective mandates, with the aim of extending the authority of the State to the entire territory of the country.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/824) and during the ICG-CAR meeting, national reconciliation remains a matter of concern, particularly due to the fact that the national reconciliation strategy has still not been adopted. However, some local initiatives are encouraging, especially the activities of the religious platform, which is still playing a vital role in that area. The PBC, with its experience in this area, remains committed to supporting all kinds of initiatives aimed at addressing communal tensions, and welcomes the Secretary-General's commitment to supporting the Government in this regard.

Last but not least, there is the issue of the rule of law. As has often been mentioned, national reconciliation, in particular, but also to a certain extent DDRR and SSR, cannot be successful without addressing the issue of impunity. I am pleased to report that some key steps leading to the establishment of the Special Criminal Court have been taken, thereby allowing for the launch of the recruitment process for national and international magistrates.

The Central African Republic has come a long way since its last relapse into conflict. Since 2012, the Council has been following closely the development of the situation in the country and has witnessed the positive steps achieved recently following the return of constitutional order. Yet the path to stability is still being hampered by many challenges, and a risk into relapse is, unfortunately, still a plausible scenario. As illustrated by Mr. Ladsous, the security situation remains volatile. That is probably the main reason that the support of the international community will be crucial in the coming months. We are aware that many situations around the world need the Council's urgent attention, but the singularity of the situation in the Central African Republic, its geographical situation, the impact of the crisis on the region and the relatively modest investments needed should make the case of the Central African Republic a priority for the international community.

For all those reasons, it is our collective duty to ensure the success of the important next step, which is the upcoming Donors Conference to be held in Brussels on 17 November. The national strategy for recovery and peace consolidation, as well as the framework for mutual accountability with the international community, will need to be shared in advance to ensure an optimal preparation for the Donors Conference. In the upcoming weeks, the configuration will organize an event with the main stakeholders in order to inform PBC members of the specifics of the Conference and contribute to making it a success. It is time we translate our efforts into tangible contributions that can improve the lives of women and men in the Central African Republic.

I would like to conclude by thanking the Central African authorities for their hospitality and their constant support for the activities of the configuration. I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Onanga-Anyanga and his team for their assistance and all of their efforts.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Laassel for the briefing that he made on behalf of Ambassador Hilale.

I shall now give the floor to the member of the Council who wishes to make a statement.

Mr. Bermúdez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Hervé Ladsous, for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/824) and an update on the most recent developments in the Central African Republic. I also thank Mr. Laassel for his briefing of the report of the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Uruguay acknowledges that the Central African Republic took a decisive step this year with a democratically elected President taking up office, the formation of an inclusive Government and the setting up of a National Assembly, among other important milestones. Those achievements must now be consolidated by addressing the root causes of the crisis. To that end, we encourage the new President and his Government to take specific, visible measures to achieve national reconciliation. In that regard, Uruguay welcomes the various reforms being implemented by the current Government, with the support of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and other international partners. Such reforms are being implemented in the defence, security and justice sectors, as well as in the national disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme. Nonetheless, in spite of the progress being made, the Central African Republic continues to face monumental challenges, in particular with regard to the humanitarian and security situations.

Uruguay remains concerned about the country's fragile humanitarian situation, as more than 2.3 million people — virtually half of the country's population — remains dependent upon humanitarian assistance. It is also estimated that there are more than 450,000 refugees in neighbouring countries and approximately 380,000 internally displaced. In that regard, we trust that national authorities, with the support of the humanitarian community, MINUSCA and other international partners, will continue their efforts to ease the situation and meet the basic humanitarian needs of the population.

With regard to the security situation, increasing tensions among communities and clashes among armed groups are a source of concern. In addition, crime and serious human rights abuses by armed groups continue to pose a threat to civilians. In that respect, Uruguay condemns the incidents sparked by the murder of a Central African Republic army officer, on Tuesday 4 October, in the capital of Bangui, which have, to date, led to the death of, at least, 11 civilians. To end the insecurity and human rights violations, it is critical to combat impunity. In that regard, it should be noted that the Government is committed to selecting and appointing magistrates in order to set up the Special Criminal Court before the end of the year, which would help to put an end to impunity.

In conclusion, Uruguay highlights the efforts made by the Government of the Central African Republic, which, with the support of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, is making progress on a national strategy to restore and rebuild peace, whose outcome document could be used as an instrument to mobilize resources during the Donors Conference scheduled to be held in Brussels on 17 November.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Central African Republic.

Ms. Kpongo (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I would like in particular to thank Mr. Ladsous for his presentation of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/824), which was comprehensive and focused the attention of all of the members of the Security Council on what remains to be done in the Central African Republic.

Despite the efforts that have already been made and those that the Government, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the international community continue to make, the situation in the Central African Republic remains extremely fragile. That is why it is important to continue to pay particular attention to the situation. We are not talking about inter-community actions; these are really provocations. I would prefer to hear mention being made of gangs and of people who snub peace in our country in order to ensure that we do not achieve the goals we have set.

It is important to ensure that resolution 2301 (2016) is implemented and, in particular when it comes to non-State armed groups. It is those armed groups that continue to sow the seeds of the terror throughout the country, and even in Bangui. When someone is killed and it cannot be explained, it elicits a negative reaction and more people die as a result. It is crucial for the Security Council to continue to support MINUSCA's efforts and to ensure that all material and logistical resources needed are supplied, as mentioned in the report. This report should compel us to do more and to realize that there is still much left to be done. If we do not pay attention, what is occurring now could continue and the very implementation of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration programme, and even reconciliation, could pose more problems.

We have already engaged in dialogue in the Central African Republic in the past. We have tried to ensure that communities work with each other. After the elections and when the transition ended, the situation was going well. But regrettably, we acknowledge that the efforts we had been making to achieve the goals we set are now being threatened. That is why I will continue to support the work of MINUSCA, of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and of all those who participated in the latest contact group meeting, so that we can work together to ensure that our country will succeed in re-establishing peace. When we talk about the Brussels Conference, what we reap there will fall short. We will still face the issue of security and that of struggling to ensure that every Central African can enjoy safety and go about their business in peace. The President has emphasized that in his statements, even following the recent unfortunate events. He has underscored that he is not the President of a particular group, but that he is the President of all Central Africans. And we as Central Africans must stress that point ourselves in order that people understand that the time has come for us to come together to work as one.

I thank the Security Council for having once again considered this agenda item and for convening this meeting on the subject of the Secretary-General's report in order to understand that much remains to be done.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.